

By

Tim Bridgham

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If you spend enough time around Blink you're bound to hear the acronym HCDE. [That's Human Centered Design and Engineering](#) to the uninitiated but most folks in the UX world, especially in Seattle, will have heard of this program at the University of Washington. Being a recent transplant to Seattle (and in turn, Blink) I was intrigued to learn many Blinkers have connections to this program, both in teaching and in completion of either their undergraduate, masters, or certificate program.

This past weekend Blink provided support to some of the current HCDE MS students by allowing them to use our lab facilities to run a usability test for their assigned client. Emma Bulajewski explains further how the students partnered with us:

"We are HCDE MS students from the University of Washington taking the Usability Studies class this quarter, learning the ropes of designing, executing, and reporting on usability testing. Our team lucked out and had the chance to work with our favorite local outdoor retailer for our project. Our clients were specifically interested in improving the gift card purchasing experience online by uncovering pain points in the current experience and making recommendations for improvements.

As students with limited resources, we often have to be scrappy and creative about acquiring the tools needed in order to do quality work. In this situation, UW has only one kitted-out usability lab for the school, and we found the lab had already been booked up for the days we needed to conduct our testing. Our goal had been to have the hands-on experience of running sessions in a professional lab for our study, so we decided to get scrappy and reach out to Blink UX to ask if they would be willing to sponsor the use of their labs for a few hours.

Within a few minutes of sending the request Blink's CXO, Kelly Franznick, replied to our email saying they would be happy to help out by providing free use of their lab spaces. We wouldn't be resigning ourselves to testing in a noisy Starbucks after all! We spent all day Sunday in the sun-filled office space, overlooking the Puget Sound, with all sessions running smoothly and discovered many actionable findings we'll be passing on to our client soon."

As the manager of Blink's labs I assisted the students with the technical side of the testing. I was struck with their enthusiasm and thankfulness. It was great to see the excitement they had for helping their client all while repeatedly and genuinely thanking me (and Blink) for my assistance and time.

"A huge thank you to Blink's IT guru, Tim Bridgham, for spending his day off as our lab technician, participant greeter, and all-around gracious host. And of course, a massive thank you to Kelly Franznick and everyone at Blink for being so generous with your lovely space. We did great work thanks to you all!"

We're happy to help, HCDE Crew.



Pictured above from left to right are UW HCDE students Joe Wilson, Emma Bulajewski, Cheryl Courtis, and Lukas Eiermann.

*Tim is one-half of the technology team at Blink helping to make the amazing work we do even more amazing. On the weekends Tim can be found on his bike, on a trail, or sipping lattes with his wife at Espresso Vivace.*